UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1998/45
14 May 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1998
New York, 6-30 July 1998
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

Annual reports of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council

1. In its decision 98/5 of 24 April 1998, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) took note of the reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1998/14 and Corr.1). The Executive Board also decided to transmit the reports, together with the comments made on them, to the Council for consideration at its 1998 substantive session.

2. Section I of the present document contains the report of the Administrator; section II contains the report of the Executive Director of UNFPA.

3. The comments of the Executive Board on the report are found in section III below, which is an extract of the report on the annual session of the Executive Board.

* E/1998/100.

98-13530 (E) 080698

I. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

PURPOSE

The present report is prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 50/120 and 47/199 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1997/52, 1997/59 and 1997/61. As in previous years, the report has been prepared in a common format agreed to by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report and transmit it, with its comments, to the Council.

CONTENTS

		Page
PART ONE	FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 47/199 OF 22 DECEMBER 1992 AND 50/120 OF 20 DECEMBER 1995 AND FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	3
PART TWO	FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227 OF 24 MAY 1995 AND TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY	10
PART THREE	FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/52 OF 23 JULY 1997: HIV/AIDS	11
PART FOUR	FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/61 OF 25 JULY 1997: INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS	12
PART FIVE	RECOMMENDATION	19

I. FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 47/199 OF 22 DECEMBER 1992 AND 50/120 OF 20 DECEMBER 1995 AND FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. UNDP actively pursued, during 1997, the follow-up to the implementation of the above resolutions, which were strongly reinforced by the Secretary-General's programme for reform introduced in two stages as Track I (March 1997) and Track II (July 1997 - see document A/51/950). The reform programme covers all aspects of United Nations operations and represents "the most extensive and far-reaching reforms in the 52-year history of the Organization".

2. While focusing on the follow-up to the above resolutions, the present report will include the implications of relevant provisions of the Secretary-General's reform programme as they affect operational activities for development. UNDP is strongly committed to and engaged in implementing the reform programme: for example, the Administrator chairs the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and its Executive Committee and UNDP continues to be manager and funder of the resident coordinator system. UNDP also funds and provides the Director and most of the staff of the United Nations Development Group Office (DGO), which acts as secretariat to the UNDG and provides support to the resident coordinator system. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have seconded staff to DGO as associate directors. Such secondments have been strongly recommended within UNDG and other UNDG members are expected to follow suit.

3. Finally, through its mandates given by the Executive Board and its programme and administrative activities at the country and at headquarters levels, UNDP continues to serve as a unifying and supportive force for the United Nations system as a whole in achieving poverty eradication and sustainable human development (SHD).

A. Programme matters

Field coordination: the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

4. UNDP attributes great importance to UNDAF in view of its potential for accelerating the harmonization of United Nations system programming and responses to country needs. UNDAF will provide the United Nations system with a framework for strategic analysis, more effective provision of development assistance consistent with national priorities and mandates, and help to achieve greater impact at the country level.

5. Together with other UNDG members, UNDP has actively participated in and supported the UNDAF process over the past year, both at headquarters and country levels. Activities have included reviews and policy discussions at the Programme Management Oversight Committee (PMOC), guidance to country teams and resident coordinators, support to the preparation of the provisional guidelines, including a core set of indicators, identification of organizational focal

points and facilitators, and the use of human, technical and financial resources to sustain active participation in the process at the country level. Efforts are also ongoing to improve coordination and communication on UNDAF within headquarters as well as to expand support to UNDP country offices participating in the pilot phase.

6. A distinctive and especially valuable source of UNDP support for UNDAF has been through its management of the resident coordinator system. In line with the Secretary-General's reform initiatives, the resident coordinator system is playing a vital role in mobilizing the United Nations system and UNDG, in particular, towards common objectives by providing the authority and mechanisms for coordinated action. In recognition of this, UNDP has already made numerous investments to improve the effectiveness of the resident coordinator system and is committed to its continued strengthening in the future. UNDP also expects that the follow-up to UNDAF and other activities aimed at the harmonization of policies and procedures will place greater demands on the resident coordinator system, necessitating close monitoring of performance and additional measures to enhance its role in field-level coordination.

7. UNDP is of the view that the longer-term success of UNDAF will depend on the quality of the product itself and the extent to which its substance is reflected in the programming processes of individual United Nations entities. For this to happen, UNDAF will need a strong conceptual basis for problem analysis and strategy development - UNDP believes that within the overarching aim of poverty eradication, SHD provides a solid foundation in this respect, as does the integrated follow-up to the United Nations conferences; UNDAF must also aim to be more inclusive of all United Nations bodies, including the specialized agencies; more work will have to be done on the harmonization of programming policies and procedures as well as of administrative and financial management; and substantive collaboration at the level of interventions will need to increase, for example, through greater use of collaborative programmes. There must also be substantial simplification of both individual and collaborative programming instruments and procedures.

8. UNDAF must also provide an opportunity for the United Nations to look outwards, at the role, relevance and efficacy of its presence as a member of the development community, in view of the priorities, efforts and achievements of other actors. UNDAF should increasingly help us to situate the United Nations within the national development community and promote greater efforts towards defining and building-up core competencies. It should also help to strengthen the dialogue with other development partners, including donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international financial institutions (IFIs), in ways that reinforce the resident coordinator system leadership role within the United Nations system at the country level.

9. The governing bodies (i.e., the Executive Board and the Economic and Social Council) may wish to note the potential of UNDAF to promote the harmonization of United Nations programme activities at the country level and to encourage strongly the implementation of UNDAF by UNDP and other United Nations entities, through the resident coordinator system.

Field coordination: the resident coordinator system

10. The reform programme of the Secretary-General has reaffirmed UNDP's role as manager and funder of the resident coordinator system. The strengthening of the resident coordinator system continues to receive close and active attention from UNDP. A number of measures have been taken or supported to enable the resident coordinator system to play a more effective role in operational activities for development through collaborative programming around key themes. The efficiency of the operational activities of the United Nations system at the country level envisioned in the United Nations reform process have also been enhanced through measures taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system.

11. UNDP has continued to widen the pool for the selection of resident coordinators. For example, 30 per cent of the 1997 resident coordinator appointments were from United Nations organizations other than UNDP. UNDP has been an active member of the UNDG Working Group on Resident Coordinator Matters. This Group has examined ways to improve the resident coordinator selection process. In this context, UNDP will lead an inter-agency group to develop a competency assessment model for selection of resident coordinators. UNDP is also preparing a separate and distinct job description for resident coordinators for the UNDG to consider. The Administrator wrote to all resident coordinators in 1997 to provide guidance for implementing the Secretary-General's reform initiatives.

12. Based on many interviews with resident coordinators and other stakeholders of the resident coordinator system, UNDP led the development of a draft set of resident coordinator competencies to be used for appraisal purposes. These competencies, after wide circulation and comment, were approved by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ). They provide the basis for the competency-based system for the appraisal of resident coordinators being piloted to assess 1997 performance. It is an exception-based system, through which members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) will comment on the performance of those resident coordinators who exceed or fail to meet fully the expectations established in the resident coordinator competency set. This pilot experience will be used to identify development and other management needs and will provide a basis for the broadening of the appraisal process to include the United Nations country team.

13. In view of the increasing number of first-time resident coordinators from other ACC organizations, UNDP has further strengthened its commitment to providing training and briefing on the roles, responsibilities and accountability in the several functions which they are called upon to perform. A two-week induction programme for first-time resident coordinators is available, to which has been added organized briefings with United Nations offices, funds and programmes. This programme, organized by UNDP, is delivered in close collaboration with the United Nations, the Development Group Office (DGO), CCPOQ and a number of individual funds, programmes and specialized agencies. In 1997, 12 resident coordinators participated in this annual programme, including four staff new to UNDP. Since 1994, this induction programme has been provided to 69 first-time resident coordinators, including 16 staff new to UNDP.

14. In order to assure that the first-time resident coordinators from other ACC organizations are fully able to draw upon the experience of their peers, and the resources and assistance of UNDP, a new programme of mentoring and training was established in 1997. Under this programme, the learning needs of resident coordinators from ACC and external organizations are individually reviewed and a plan for support agreed upon. Each individual works for several weeks in the office of an experienced resident coordinator, who then serves as a mentor on an ongoing basis. A programme of individual training and headquarters briefings is also established. Nine resident coordinators and nominees are currently being assisted.

15. The evolution of the resident coordinator role also requires that experienced resident coordinators be afforded an opportunity to develop further their competencies in future visioning and advocacy. Since 1995, UNDP has sponsored a series of workshops in conjunction with the United Nations Staff College Project on the competencies required for leadership of country-level operational collaboration within the resident coordinator system and with national and international partners. An external evaluation of the first three workshops in this series was carried out in early 1997. Post-workshop surveys and interviews concluded that the workshops strengthened the resident coordinators' abilities to provide leadership and resulted in more strategic programming.

16. Since 1995, 70 resident coordinators and 15 agency and NGO staff have participated in these workshops. Based on the recommendations of the 1997 evaluation, a redesigned workshop took place in late 1997, focusing on the competencies required for the implementation at country level of the United Nations reform process. The 1997 workshop was attended by 22 resident coordinators and 9 representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and funds, and NGOs.

17. UNDP also strongly supports the common initiatives of the resident coordinator system. In 1997, it actively participated in the redesign of the programme of workshops on management of field coordination for senior country representatives, a series which has improved teamwork within almost 100 country teams of the resident coordinator system. UNDP continues to cost share the management of this programme with the United Nations Staff College project.

18. Through JCGP, UNDP has also demonstrated its commitment to the collaborative model of coordination. Under the direction of UNDGO, with UNICEF and UNFPA, UNDP co-led the development and delivery of two training workshops for facilitators and focal points for the new UNDAF process. This joint training is seen as a model for future collaboration and further areas for common effort are under active discussion.

19. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the significant concrete measures taken by UNDP to strengthen the resident coordinator system and encourage continued efforts in this direction.

Capacity-building and national execution

20. Capacity-building is a main element of UNDP assistance. Capacity-building involves both promoting the enabling environment for institutional capacity-building and developing individual human resources. The UNDP approach to capacity-building stresses the need to create and strengthen national capacities as well as to encourage the retention and effective utilization of the capacity and skills acquired.

21. UNDP sees national execution as an important instrument for strengthening the management capabilities and technical expertise of national institutions and individuals, through learning by doing. Over the last year, UNDP has made several efforts to improve further the effectiveness of national execution and its contribution to national capacities. These include the preparation of revised procedures for national execution and for NGO execution, the development of standards and a checklist to determine capacity for execution, a technical advisory paper for capacity development as well as new guidelines and tools for the programme approach and numerous training initiatives.

22. As the preferred modality, national execution is applied to the large majority of UNDP-supported programmes and projects. This entails full government management and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources, through adequate substantive and financial reporting and achievement of programme/project objectives. UNDP encourages wide participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring by civil society, including the NGO community, a wide range of national entities and United Nations specialized agencies.

23. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the further concrete progress made by UNDP to build on the synergy between capacity-building and national execution and to encourage continued strong links between these two areas in programme design and implementation.

Harmonization of programme cycles and programme procedures

24. The harmonization of programming periods has been pursued through the submission of country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) and requests for extension of current country programmes. The new successor programming arrangements allow for flexible duration of CCFs which facilitate the harmonization of programming periods. At present, 27 country programming periods are reported to be harmonized, 54 more are to be harmonized by 1999 and 31 lack a common starting date, including eight which, because of special circumstances, are not likely to be harmonized in the foreseeable future.

25. UNDP has also chaired the JCGP Sub-Group on Programme Implementation and Country-Level Management, which has addressed the harmonization of procedures at the operational level. Such harmonization is indispensable if the goals of UNDAF and closer United Nations collaboration are to be attained. Results to date include a policy on payment to government staff and a draft format for collaborative programmes/projects that is currently being tested in countries where such initiatives are being developed. Studies on the practices and procedures relating to programme or project personnel have also been made. UNDP

also served as task manager for the redraft of those chapters in the CCPOQ manual dealing with national execution and the programme approach.

26. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the contribution of UNDP through the current series of CCFs to the harmonization of programming periods as well as its contribution to harmonized procedures and to encourage further progress under the UNDG subsidiary machinery.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

27. At the request of the JCGP participants in the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) UNDP organized a workshop in January 1997, in New York to present the draft of the new handbook for programme managers entitled "Results-oriented Monitoring and Evaluation". UNDP received positive feedback from the participants. The handbook was finalized during 1997, printed and widely distributed to country offices, headquarters and United Nations specialized agencies.

28. In 1997, UNDP developed and distributed the new Central Evaluation Database (CEDAB). In a windows-based easy-to-use format, CEDAB contains information relating to the evaluations of over 1,500 UNDP projects. CEDAB enables its users to research UNDP experience with different types of projects while its range of data can contribute to the design of new projects.

29. UNDP launched its new evaluation website in October 1997, allowing individuals in UNDP country offices and at headquarters to have on-line access to: (a) UNDP evaluation reports conducted by the Evaluation Office, including major findings and lessons learned; (b) UNDP evaluation methodologies; (c) information about the Evaluation Office; (d) links to other evaluation websites.

30. UNDP and the Department of Evaluation and International Audit of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency undertook a joint review of performance measurement systems of selected public sector and aid agencies. The aim of the review was to learn from others. In November 1997, the book Measuring and Managing Results: Lessons for Development Cooperation was published.

31. UNDP is part of a task force formed by the Expert Group on Evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The task force is in charge of monitoring the goals set for 2015 by the DAC in relation to the objectives of the initiative "Shaping the 21st Century".

32. With the transfer of the strategic planning function to the new Bureau for Planning and Resource Management as a result of the implementation of UNDP 2001, the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning became the Evaluation Office. After an extensive consultative process within UNDP headquarters and with members of the Executive Board, the Office identified three areas of focus for its activities in 1998: knowledge and learning; methodologies and capacity development; and the conduct of strategic evaluations. Full details of the activities of the Evaluation Office are provided in the report of the

Administrator on evaluation (DP/1998/19), which will be submitted to the Executive Board at its annual session 1998.

33. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the concrete progress achieved by UNDP in the fields of monitoring and evaluation both within UNDP and through IAWG and to encourage further harmonization of procedures and activities in these areas.

Country strategy note

34. Country strategy notes (CSNs), where they exist, have been described as the demand side of development cooperation, the Government's own expression of the country's requirements for development cooperation. Prepared in full consultation with the Government, UNDAF complements the CSN where it exists, and has been described as the supply-side response by the United Nations system to the Government's identified needs for cooperation. To date, CSNs have been completed in 27 countries, with drafts prepared in 19 other countries. In 15 countries, working groups with work plans for CSN formulation have been set up. A total of 92 countries have expressed interest in the CSN. Through its management and funding of the resident coordinator system as well as through its programme activities, UNDP has facilitated the CSN process in all those countries where the Government has expressed an interest in it.

35. Draft revised CSN guidelines have been prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs under the auspices of CCPOQ. These revised guidelines provide for inclusion of resource levels: the relationship to UNDAF; a consultative mechanism; identification of themes; improved monitoring and evaluation; and increased participation by the United Nations system as a whole. The new guidelines are expected to facilitate implementation of the CSN in all countries where the Government has decided to institute one.

36. The governing bodies may wish to take note of the progress achieved so far on the CSN and UNDAF and to emphasize the complementarity of the two instruments.

B. Management, personnel and finance matters (common premises and services)

37. During 1997, rent-free common premises were leased from the Governments in Algeria, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Common premises for the exclusive use of United Nations specialized agencies were constructed by the Government in Lesotho. Common premises were also rented from the Government in the Russian Federation. In addition, UNDP and UNFPA initiated action to optimize the use of space in the common premises in Uganda. Some of the premises required renovation and adaptation, which were carried out with funds provided by the United Nations agencies occupying the premises.

38. UNDP took an active part in the JCGP Sub-group on Common Premises and Services, which has the responsibility of accelerating the introduction of common premises. Meeting on a weekly basis, the representatives of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP, supported by international real estate consultants are

preparing a methodology and operational guidelines for establishing future common premises. The sub-group has established criteria for the selection of priority countries, taking into account the provision of rent-free accommodations by Governments.

39. Bolivia, Egypt and Namibia were selected as pilot countries for applying the new criteria and conducting the initial analysis. The results will permit the refinement of methodology and of the implementation process. Approximately 10 additional countries will then be selected as "Tier I" countries for analysis, preparation of a real estate plan, including cost/benefit analysis, and possible introduction of common premises in 1998. The overall strategy calls for progressive introduction of countries as Tiers II, III and IV. It is proposed that all information relating to real estate from the JCGP agencies be organized into a single, common database.

40. On 15 September 1997, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of a United Nations Executive Coordinator for Common Services to head the Task Force on Common Services. UNDP is part of this New York-centred group, which is examining existing arrangements with a view to extending common services wherever this can result in more effective services. The first objective of this exercise is to provide cost-effective, quality and timely services on a competitive basis with full client satisfaction. The Task Force established working groups to develop proposals for each of the areas concerned: procurement; information technology; integrated management information systems; personnel services; financial services; legal services; transportation and traffic services; facilities management; printing facilities; and archives and records management.

41. The governing bodies may wish to acknowledge the concrete steps taken by UNDP and other UNDG members in establishing common premises and services and to encourage further progress in line with the Secretary-General's reform programme.

II. FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227 OF 24 MAY 1995 AND TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

42. In its decision 98/3 the Executive Board established an open-ended ad hoc working group to develop a sustainable funding strategy for UNDP. The ad hoc working group will review the various funding mechanisms as well as other options to place the funding of UNDP on a predictable, assured and continuous basis, taking into account various budgetary processes in contributing countries as well as the need for more equitable burden-sharing among donor countries.

43. The working group will also develop guidelines and criteria to set funding targets for UNDP core resources based on the goals and priorities of the Programme, development needs and priorities of programme countries as identified in their country cooperation frameworks; projected core contributions, the

funding role of UNDP in the larger international development financing context; and existing long-term commitments and strategies.

44. Simultaneously, in response to Action 11 (a) of the Secretary-General's reform package and following discussions within UNDG, the Administrator has provided to the Secretary-General a proposal for multi-year funding of operational activities based on multi-year negotiated pledges with an underlying burden-sharing arrangement. The proposal is intended for informal discussion with stakeholders of the funds and programmes and incorporates comments from UNDG members.

45. The Executive Board is expected to review the progress of the working group at each of its forthcoming sessions and to adopt a decision on a sustainable funding strategy at its third regular session of 1998.

46. Recognizing these decisions and steps already taken by UNDP, the governing bodies may wish to provide guidance for similar time-bound efforts by all funds and programmes to produce strategies for funding on a predictable, assured and continuous basis, taking into account budgetary processes and the need for more equitable burden-sharing among donors.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/52 OF 23 JULY 1997: HIV/AIDS

47. Throughout 1997, UNDP has continued to work collaboratively with the secretariat of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and with other co-sponsors to respond to the development implications of the epidemic and has contributed to the work of numerous inter-agency initiatives.

48. At the country level, within the framework of United Nations Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, efforts have been made to increase the capacity of the resident coordinator system to support an expanded response to the epidemic. Technical and financial support have also been provided for the preparation of national strategic plans addressing HIV/AIDS. At the regional level, UNDP has undertaken an evaluation of its Africa regional project on HIV and Development and in collaboration with UNAIDS and other development partners has organized a consensus-building workshop to develop the next phase of this project. A strategic plan has been prepared for the Asia and Pacific regional project on HIV and Development, and preparatory work is under way for collaborative activity between UNDP and UNAIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the Arab States and in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

49. At the global level, UNDP has participated in inter-agency working groups and has been actively involved in the preparation of activities relating to the UNAIDS Coordinated Appeal for the 1998-1999 Biennium Supplemental Funded Activities.

50. In terms of its role in advocacy, UNDP has been drawing international attention to the devastating scale of the epidemic and its potential impact upon present and future generations in the most affected countries, many of which are

in Sub-Saharan Africa, an issue highlighted in the revised UNAIDS statistics for 1997.

51. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the strong support provided by UNDP to combating HIV/AIDS both through the resident coordinator system and through its programme activities and to call for continued support to coordinated efforts in this area by United Nations entities.

IV. FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/61 OF 25 JULY 1997: INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

52. As mandated by ACC and the Economic and Social Council, integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to recent international conferences has occurred through three inter-agency task forces - on basic social services for all, an enabling environment for economic and social development, and employment and sustainable livelihoods for all - as well as through the Inter-Agency Committee for Women and Gender Equality, which is following up on the Fourth World Conference on Women. Active in all four bodies, UNDP also chaired the working group on governance within the task force on the enabling environment. The three task forces have submitted their formal reports but are expected to continue as informal substantive networks with lead agencies.

53. The outputs of the task forces can be broadly categorized as follows: (a) identification of key elements of the national policy framework for pursuing conference goals; (b) recommendations for United Nations system programming; (c) arrangements for streamlining national reporting; (d) elaboration of statistics and indicators; (e) identification of other areas requiring attention (e.g., the role of civil society, the use of information technology); and (f) institutional arrangements for follow-up.

54. ACC reviewed the output of the task forces and placed the question of follow-up in the broader context of United Nations system reform. It stressed, inter alia, the important role for civil society and reiterated the commitment of member organizations to active follow-up, and requested subsidiary machinery, organizations and the resident coordinator system to make institutional arrangements for follow-up. In the first instance, an inter-agency workshop was convened in Turin on 11-12 December 1997 and identified country-level arrangements for follow-up of the global conferences and summits. The workshop addressed modalities of translating and implementing the policy and programmatic objectives set out in the global agendas. The workshop recommended several outputs: (a) an integrated message to country teams on the follow-up process; (b) guidelines or guidance on modalities of implementation, including on the utilization of the outputs of the task forces; and (c) the identification of measures to be taken to support activities in such fields as training, development and utilization of indicators and databases and reporting mechanisms. The 35 participants in the workshop, from all major funds, programmes and specialized agencies, the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were joined by one senior national official from Barbados representing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. The report

was presented to the Working Group of CCPOQ on 23 January for endorsement and transmittal to ACC.

55. In addition to its participation in the above, the inter-agency machinery that has provided country-level and system-wide guidelines, UNDP has actively pursued follow-up to individual international conferences within its mandated areas of activity and competence as discussed below.

56. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the outputs of the ACC-led inter-agency coordination process on integrated conference follow-up and, following the outcomes of the special session of the Council on this subject in April 1998, propose further measures to ensure continued integrated follow-up to the conferences alongside follow-up to individual conferences.

A. World Summit for Social Development

57. UNDP continues to take an active role globally and regionally in the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) while maintaining its main focus at the country level. The UNDP mandate to make poverty its overriding priority has necessitated substantial restructuring of programme focus and has begun to change the nature of dialogue between country offices, Governments and civil society. The emphasis that UNDP places on the sustainable, and human aspects of development has provided an important contrasting perspective, already influential throughout the development community.

58. The analysis of country cooperation frameworks for the 1997-2000 programming cycle has provided UNDP with clear evidence of the interests of Governments in engaging with the United Nations system to address major themes of the Copenhagen Programme of Action. Important results include increased emphasis on explicit social development initiatives, such as establishing national anti-poverty strategies and targets; enhancing the sustainable livelihoods of those living in poverty; mainstreaming gender issues in development programming; and broadening the institutional base for civil society organization (CSO) cooperation with the United Nations system. UNDP has strengthened the participation of CSOs in its normative and policy-setting work. Guidelines have been finalized for execution of UNDP programmes by non-governmental organizations. A UNDP policy statement on CSOs and a public information disclosure policy on collaboration with CSOs have also been issued.

59. Among the concrete achievements in each of the three major WSSD themes, the Human Development Report 1997 was devoted to documenting the multidimensionality, extent, severity and complexity of global poverty, devising new ways (e.g., the human poverty index) to measure it, and to proposing feasible and affordable strategies for combating it. At the policy level, UNDP is engaged, often in partnership with other institutions of the United Nations system, in research activities on linkages between poverty reduction and gender equality and between poverty reduction and inequality, as well as in assessing the impacts of globalization on poverty and resource distribution. The Poverty Strategies Initiative (a multi-donor programme launched immediately following WSSD) has facilitated UNDP work with over 80 countries in supporting country

anti-poverty strategies in various stages of development. In partnership with UNICEF and UNFPA, UNDP has also initiated efforts in several countries to explore the feasibility of 20/20 compacts, and is involved closely in planning an international event in Hanoi in late 1998 as a sequel to the 1996 Oslo Conference on 20/20 convened by the Government of Norway.

60. The involvement of UNDP with the second major WSSD theme of employment has included active participation, at country as well as at global levels, in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Livelihoods, chaired by the International Labour Organization. UNDP led two of the seven country reviews conducted by this Task Force and presented a note on operationalizing the concept of "sustainable livelihoods" to the Task Force, recommendations from which were explicitly adopted in the framework for the country reviews and documented in the final report.

61. With regard to the third major WSSD theme, UNDP supported an International Institute for Labour Studies project on social exclusion which analysed the key processes and patterns that contribute to the exclusion of people living in poverty from markets, assets, social services, entitlements and rights, and the kind of policies that are required to avert growing marginalization and promote social integration of excluded groups.

B. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

62. UNDP contributed actively to both the Fifth Session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Nineteenth Special Session of the General Assembly on sustainable development.

63. UNDP had several strategic objectives in preparing for the CSD and the Special Session. The overall objectives were to promote and reinforce work in the UNDP areas of focus in relation to the CSD work programme, including forests, oceans, fresh water and desertification. In addition, UNDP stressed the issues of poverty and energy. A further objective was to give life to solutions to sustainable development problems and to point to concrete actions that can be taken at all levels of society. This objective was the rationale behind the exhibition on Sustainable Development in Action co-sponsored by UNDP.

64. As a contribution to the discussion of the Special Session UNDP produced a report entitled "Energy after Rio", which outlined the importance of energy for social development and poverty alleviation.

65. The UNDP global programme components on energy, forests and water were approved in 1997. These programme components develop new approaches to development activities that include or are based on natural resources. A component on food security and sustainable agriculture will be approved in 1998.

66. The newly-established Global Water Partnership (GWP) was further developed with UNDP as a key partner. The GWP will be a cornerstone in the implementation of the global programme on water as well as a source for country level operations.

67. UNDP continued its role as partner implementing agency for the Global Environment Facility and the Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol. It also carried forward the work of Capacity 21, a programme designed to assist countries to build and strengthen their capacity to formulate sustainable development policies and effectively implement them. Capacity 21 is now operating in 52 countries.

68. UNDP played an active role as a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and participated in the development of the Action Programme, taking responsibility for components on financing and coordination of national forest programmes.

69. Integration of environment and natural resource management into all UNDP activities continues to take high priority. In 1997, UNDP began a process of review of programme procedures and efforts are being made to strengthen environment as a central theme in the Programme Manual, which will be issued in 1998.

70. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development remains an important body for the advancement of Agenda 21 and the UNCED ideals in the United Nations system. UNDP continues to participate in this and in its subcommittees on fresh water and on oceans.

C. Fourth World Conference on Women

71. In 1997, UNDP increased its policy, programme and institutional commitments to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women. At the country level, advisory notes, CCFs and national human development reports address gender gaps in development analysis and access to resources and opportunities more frequently. Programming interventions increasingly link gender equality goals strategically to poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods, environment regeneration and good governance and peace-building. The range of programming includes, for example, the integration of gender-mainstreaming issues and policies within poverty eradication programmes in Viet Nam, gender policy integration into all programming interventions in the United Republic of Tanzania, participation of indigenous women's groups in the follow-up to peace accords in Guatemala and facilitating legislation regarding violence against women in Moldova.

72. Through the resident coordinator system, UNDP facilitated joint United Nations specialized agency support to the preparation and implementation of national action plans for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is a key partner in a new pilot initiative in 10 countries for follow-up to the Conference. A special $1 million Gender Facility allocation was provided in 1997 to improve UNDP programming in 30 countries for gender equality and the advancement of women in the context of the follow-up to the Conference and to promote UNDP/UNIFEM cooperation at the country level.

73. UNDP experience and lessons learned in gender-mainstreaming contributed to the July 1997 Economic and Social Council report and discussion on mainstreaming

the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. The UNDP policy directive is incorporated in a guidance note on gender-mainstreaming, the result of a senior management review in March 1997 of baseline assessments in 20 countries. The guidance note highlights corporate responsibilities, outlines skill requirements and provides guidance on the programming and management dimensions of gender-mainstreaming.

74. Recognizing the importance of capacity-building for gender-mainstreaming, the Gender-in-Development Programme (GIDP) conducted subregional learning, communications and briefing (LCB) workshops in 1997 for gender focal points from UNDP and United Nations specialized agencies for countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Arab States. Also in 1997, a new initiative was launched with support from donors and United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to place UNV gender specialists in 20 UNDP country offices.

75. UNDP global and regional programme allocations approved in 1997 for gender equality and the advancement of women have enabled initiatives to be undertaken in, for example, a global pilot programme for the valuing of paid and unpaid labour with United Nations agency partners and cost-sharing contributions, and a research programme, in collaboration with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development on gender and poverty indicators.

76. With regard to UNDP commitments towards gender balance within the organization, accomplishments include exceeding the 1997 target of 20 per cent women at the D-2 level. Women now constitute one third of senior managers at headquarters and the number of women Resident Representatives almost doubled from 1995. Moreover, two of the seven officials at the Assistant Secretary-General level in UNDP are now women. However, much still remains to be done in achieving overall gender targets in the medium term, which continues as a top corporate priority for UNDP.

D. International Conference on Population and Development

77. Within the overall inter-agency follow-up framework on ICPD managed by UNFPA, UNDP continues its active support for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action at the country, regional and international levels.

78. The bulk of the UNDP contribution to ICPD implementation takes place through the organization's work to eradicate poverty and to mainstream gender equity into development policies and programmes. Given the UNDP multidimensional approach to poverty eradication, the links between the recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action and UNDP activities to eradicate poverty are inseparable and mutually reinforcing.

79. In addition, UNDP had direct involvement in implementing specific elements of recommendations of the ICPD Programme of Action, as outlined below.

80. UNDP collaborates with the World Health Organization, UNFPA and the World Bank on the Special Programme for Research, Development and Research Training in

Human Reproduction, which completed its research priority-setting exercise in 1997.

81. In 1997, through the Special Unit for TCDC and the Regional Programme for Africa, UNDP supported the launch of the Regional Prevention of Maternal Mortality Network as a centre of excellence for the prevention of maternal deaths associated with pregnancy and childbirth in sub-Saharan Africa in collaboration with United Nations system partners, foundations and NGOs. This programme is a network of NGOs that uses capacity-strengthening, intersectoral collaboration and multidisciplinary teamwork to provide technical cooperation in capacity-building for research to other countries in the region. Many of its activities address issues of access to and quality of care.

82. UNDP has also been actively involved in ongoing discussions with United Nations system partners, bilaterals, foundations, NGOs and the private sector related to current and future health and development challenges, with a focus on equity and the poor.

E. Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

83. UNDP activities carried out under the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) have been developed at the global, regional and national levels. At all levels, activities were developed in partnership with Governments, civil society organizations and United Nations specialized agencies. The UNDP Urban Development Cooperation Programme involves a multisectoral set of activities that cut across UNDP priority concerns with poverty eradication, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, the empowerment of women and the protection and regeneration of the environment. All these priorities, under the overall umbrella of governance concerns, strongly interact at the human settlements level.

84. As a follow-up to the Habitat II Conference, UNDP organized the International Colloquium of Mayors, held in the context of the International Conference on Governance, which took place at United Nations Headquarters in July 1997. The largest gathering of locally elected officials held at the United Nations, the Colloquium attracted mayors and local officials from 70 countries. The focus was on managing cities in a globalizing world, on strengthening partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society organizations at the local level and on promoting equity through participatory approaches in urban areas worldwide. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the establishment of the UNDP Advisory Board of Mayors.

85. Other Habitat II follow-up activities include continued UNDP support to the Urban Management Programme in Asia and the Pacific and the Asia Pacific 2000 initiative; and strengthening the contribution of civil society organizations and communities in the region to the objectives of the Habitat II Global Plan of Action.

86. UNDP has also launched the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty, which is a global network of cities committed to the objectives of Habitat II and WSSD.

87. UNDP has supported local Agenda 21 activities in Lebanon, Malawi, Turkey, Zimbabwe and other countries, thus contributing to the integration of UNCED and Habitat II objectives.

F. World Food Summit

88. The Inter-agency Network on Rural Development and Food Security was established in November 1997 to serve as the main vehicle to promote follow-up to the World Food Summit. UNDP is an active member of the Network, which is coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Consistent with decisions taken at the World Food Summit, the Network identified the resident coordinator system as the primary mechanism to promote cooperation among United Nations specialized agencies and bilateral agencies in food security programming at the country level. As of November 1997, food security thematic groups had been or were being established in 64 countries under the UNDP resident coordinator system to coordinate United Nations agency and bilateral food security programming.

89. UNDP has held a series of consultations with the heads of FAO departments and divisions to identify areas for global cooperation as follow-up to the World Food Summit. During consultations conducted in June 1997 at FAO headquarters, agreement was reached on collaboration in three priority areas: (a) national capacity-building within the FAO Special Programme on Food Production for Food Security in Low-Income Food Deficit Countries (SPFS); (b) building national capacity for community-based constraints analysis and development planning within and outside SPFS; and (c) national capacity-building within the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Mapping System (FIVIMS) Programme.

90. The World Food Summit called for international cooperation in the development of national food security action plans. UNDP participated in two panel discussions organized at FAO headquarters to review draft national agricultural strategy papers prepared by FAO. Panel papers prepared for non-African low-income food deficit countries were examined in May and strategies drafted in July for 71 non-low-income food deficit countries.

91. The World Food Summit also requested Governments, in partnership with all civil society actors, "to develop and periodically update ... a national food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system, indicating areas and populations ... affected by or at risk of hunger and malnutrition, and elements contributing to food insecurity". United Nations specialized agencies were requested to promote this work within the framework of ACC, with FAO to play a catalytic role. UNDP participated in two workshops to advance the design and implementation of FIVIMS. The first meeting was held in April at FAO headquarters with the objective of defining appropriate indicators of food insecurity and of developing a workplan for the initiation of FIVIMS activities. The second meeting was also held at FAO headquarters in December and constituted

the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on FIVIMS. UNDP was invited to chair the meeting, in which the terms of reference for the IAWG were set and draft guidelines reviewed for the implementation of FIVIMS at the national level.

92. The governing bodies may wish to recognize the concrete contributions of UNDP to the follow-up to individual conferences - particularly the World Summit for Social Development, given the overriding mandate of UNDP for the eradication of poverty - and to encourage continued coordination and balance between efforts for the follow-up to individual conferences and those relating to the integrated follow-up to conferences under the inter-agency task forces and their successor arrangements.

G. Contribution to human rights

93. UNDP recently released a corporate policy document entitled Integrating human rights with sustainable human development. Starting with the premise that poverty is an unacceptable violation of human rights, the document stresses the indivisibility and interrelatedness of all human rights.

94. Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights was signed on 4 March 1998 in New York setting out areas of cooperation in the technical assistance for the promotion of human rights.

95. UNDP support to the promotion of human rights can be seen on three levels. First, through its regular programmes UNDP strives to achieve the right to development as the basis for all its operational activities, in particular with regard to its overarching goal: the eradication of poverty. At the second level, UNDP responds to requests from Member States for technical assistance and capacity-building in their activities and policies to comply with international agreements, especially in the follow-up to international conferences, with regard to the promotion of all human rights - civil, political, economic, social and cultural. The third level of UNDP promotion of human rights is the mainstreaming of human rights concerns in all its programme activities. With due regard to national conditions and specificities, UNDP programmes seek whenever possible to broaden the enjoyment of human rights and to promote their realization.

V. RECOMMENDATION

96. The Executive Board may wish to:

Take note of the reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1998/14) and of the recommendations contained therein and decide to transmit them to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments made by delegations at the present session.

II. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

SUMMARY

The present report responds to the following decisions of the Economic and Social Council: (a) 1997/59, on measures taken in implementing the provisions of the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and their relationship to measures called for by the Secretary-General in his programme for reform; (b) 1997/59, on follow up to General Assembly resolution 50/227 concerning funding arrangements for operational activities; (c) 1997/52, on work with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); and (d) 1997/61, on the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

A draft recommendation for Board approval is contained in paragraph 36 of the report.

CONTENTS

Page

I. FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 47/199 AND 50/120 AND FOLLOW-UP TO ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 21

A. Programme matters 21

B. Management, personnel and finance: Audit and aid accountability 27

II. FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/227 OF 24 MAY 1995 AND TO ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1997/59 OF 11 JULY 1997: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 27

III. FOLLOW-UP TO ECOSOC RESOLUTION 1997/52 OF 23 JULY 1997: HIV/AIDS 28

IV. FOLLOW-UP TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1997/61 OF 25 JULY 1997: INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS 29

V. RECOMMENDATION 31

I. Follow-up to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 and Follow-up to ECOSOC Resolution 1997/59 of 11 July, 1997: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly

1. On 16 July 1997, the Secretary-General introduced a programme for reform intended to cover all aspects of United Nations operations. The recommendations and actions contained in the programme, which UNFPA strongly and fully supports, build on earlier initiatives, including those carried out within the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and in response to various General Assembly resolutions on operational activities, as well as the guidance provided by the respective Executive Boards of the funds and programmes. These recommendations guide UNFPA's plans for the development, implementation and monitoring of its programmes, as well as its interaction with its partners within the United Nations development system.

A. Programme Matters

Field coordination: The United Nations Development Assistance Framework

2. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the strengthened Resident Coordinator system are expected to further strengthen, and give greater coherence to, country-level coordination among the various partners of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), as well as among the various entities of the United Nations development system as a whole. Indeed, the UNDAF has been identified by the Secretary-General as the centerpiece for further optimizing and coordinating United Nations development efforts at the country level. Details are under discussion, but several individual components of such collaboration and coordination are already in place as a result of the efforts of the JCGP and such other initiatives as the coordinated and integrated follow-up to conferences. These include, among others, harmonization of programme cycles, the programme approach, the Common Country Assessment (CCA), theme groups and regular consultation and communication within the Resident Coordinator system.

3. The UNDAF pilot exercises have thus far resulted in first reactions that are quite clearly positive, especially in the important area of building a team spirit. Some problems have been encountered, however, in particular for a small organization such as UNFPA. The process promises to be a fairly time-consuming, resource-intensive undertaking, especially in the formative stages, and thus poses a formidable challenge for the Fund's limited staff. UNFPA has always accorded high priority to coordination with its United Nations partners, and the Fund is committed to continue the same, especially as the success of the UNDAF depends on streamlined coordination and a participatory approach. It also depends on how the Resident Coordinator carries out his or her role

in the process, as well as on the willingness of participating entities to examine existing programming procedures and requirements openly and objectively. The Fund has participated fully in all discussions and preliminary efforts to identify pilot countries, support field teams and train facilitators. The success of the UNDAF depends on its ability to respond to the priorities and needs of individual countries, while maximizing the comparative advantages offered by the United Nations system as a whole and taking advantage of the specific niche of each participating organization.

4. UNFPA is particularly aware of the need to ensure that there is adequate understanding and appreciation within the country teams about the different mandates and objectives of each of the participating organizations. UNFPA will continue to give special attention to ensuring that cross-cutting issues such as population and gender, for example, are adequately addressed in all UNDAFs. In implementing the UNDAF, it will be of crucial importance not to impose exercises that will duplicate past programming efforts or that will require a review of processes that are already completed. Flexible measures will have to be devised, therefore, to adapt the requirements of the UNDAF to completed or ongoing efforts in order to ensure that there is ownership of the process by all concerned. Another important requirement will be to ensure that the UNDAF is an inclusive, not an exclusionary, process.

Field coordination: The Resident Coordinator system

5. The UNDG and the mechanisms of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) are working to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system to enable it to provide better coordination and more efficient support to operational activities for development of the United Nations system at the country level. Progress is being made in some areas, for example, in the nomination of an increasing number of Resident Coordinators who come from a wide range of organizations in the system. This has widened the pool from which they are selected and improved the appraisal and selection process of Resident Coordinators. Still, further efforts need to be made in such areas as:

(a) Development and application of a participatory performance appraisal system for Resident Coordinators;

(b) Introduction of an independent assessment of the competencies for Resident Coordinators, to be carried out on an inter-agency basis;

(c) Definition and adoption of a transparent and participatory selection process for Resident Coordinators;

(d) Approval of revised terms of reference for Resident Coordinators and commencement of their application;

(e) Recognition of the Resident Coordinator function as a career goal for the entire United Nations system;

(f) Application of guidelines for annual country reports to include work-planning objectives for the coordination function;

(g) Further progress on issues related to the linking of the Resident Coordinator function with that of Representative of any one of the UNDG or United Nations organizations;

(h) Further clarification of lines of authority for Resident Coordinators.

6. UNFPA strongly believes that the Resident Coordinator must be able to function as a strong and impartial advocate for the goals of all United Nations organizations and for the development needs of the country concerned. It has therefore participated in all ongoing discussions, briefings and workshops aimed at expanding and clarifying this issue. The Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), through its Working Group on the Resident Coordinator System, is helping to ensure that the Resident Coordinator system is a mechanism that is owned by the larger United Nations system. As a result, the headquarters-support function for the Resident Coordinator system is taking on an increasingly multi-agency character. For example, UNFPA has seconded a senior staff member to the UNDG Office.

National execution, national capacity-building and harmonization

7. UNFPA continues to extend the highest priority to strengthening the capacity of governments to coordinate population assistance in their countries and to enhance the capacity of national institutions to carry out population activities. The Fund's emphasis on promoting national execution through capacity-building has been reflected in UNFPA's programming guidelines, all of which have been recently revised. The Fund expects to be able to make concrete recommendations on ways of enhancing absorptive capacity of programme countries based on a study that is currently being carried out, the results of which will be reported to the Executive Board at its annual session in 1998.

8. Training of nationals is being offered in a number of areas, and national staff are increasingly being used in accordance with the Fund's Guidelines for the Recruitment and Administration of National Project Staff. In the context of UNFPA's Technical Support Services (TSS) arrangements, and as emphasized in the Fund's guidelines on TSS, top priority for technical assistance must be given to using national experts. Since one of the primary tasks of the Country Support Teams (CSTs) is to help build national capacity in the countries they assist, the CSTs provide technical backstopping only if national expertise is not otherwise available.

9. With a view to building national capacity, UNFPA provides support for national project personnel, including both professional and general service staff. Such personnel provide additional support to host governments in the implementation of UNFPA-supported activities and are paid in accordance with guidelines common to UNFPA and UNDP for the recruitment and administration of national project staff. UNFPA is committed to employing system-wide standards as and when they are determined by the UNDG under the new reform proposals.

10. A recent independent evaluation has confirmed that UNFPA has achieved notable progress in national capacity-building. For example, the Fund's assistance has produced encouraging results in such areas as policy formulation; strengthening of reproductive health delivery systems; incorporation of population and sex education in school curricula; research into linkages between population and development; and provision and upgrading of infrastructural capacity, including equipment. UNFPA has also consistently striven to ensure that materials produced by inter-agency task forces and examples of best practices are gradually expanded and further developed in programme countries with a view to strengthening national capacities.

11. Several specific programme-related matters require further work within the UNDG to clarify common approaches and definitions and to devise ways to streamline and standardize them. These include, among others, national execution; national capacity-building, including assessment of national management, monitoring, evaluation and audit capacities; and national salaries and consultancy fees. UNFPA is committed to participating in the efforts to reach decisions on these matters and to implementing them within the Resident Coordinator system. In situations where actual joint activities will not be pursued, the Fund will work with its partners to harmonize strategies, approaches and master plans in line with national needs and priorities.

12. An evaluation of the various modalities for executing UNFPA-supported programmes was conducted in response to a request made by the Executive Board in 1994. Its ultimate aim was to develop a set of performance standards and criteria that could be used in determining appropriate executing modalities. One of the conclusions reached was that UNFPA had promoted national execution by adopting an approach intended to complement the strengths and weaknesses of national institutions with the participation of one or more international agencies. This approach entailed assessing the strengths and weaknesses of both national institutions and external agencies in order to resolve areas of insufficiencies. The evaluation identified a set of criteria for assessing potential agencies for execution of UNFPA-supported projects. The assessment is to be conducted during the Fund's Country Population Assessment, at the time when the programme's strategic actions are being developed. The criteria are broken down into two main categories -- technical capacity and managerial capacity. The application of these criteria will help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of organizations in terms of their capacity for executing UNFPA-supported projects.

Common services and premises

13. In the area of common services and premises, efforts are continuing to build on and expand the good start made by the JCGP. UNFPA has traditionally made use of certain services provided by UNDP under a subvention agreement and has participated in common and shared services arrangements. While the Fund has at times had concerns about the quality and timeliness of such services, it remains totally committed to the principle of common services and premises. UNFPA has consistently emphasized that certain management principles need to be observed in these areas: cost-efficiency, timely provision of high-quality services, transparency and full accountability.

14. On 15 September 1997, the Secretary-General announced the appointment of a United Nations Executive Coordinator for Common Services to head the Task Force on Common Services. The Task Force has established working groups to develop proposals for procurement; information technology; integrated management information systems; personnel services; financial services; legal services; transportation and traffic services; facilities management; and archives and record management. UNFPA, for its part, is committed to making progress in the UNDG and other forums on these and all related issues.

Coordination at regional and subregional levels

15. UNFPA assistance for regional and subregional activities is designed to support programme interventions at the country level. For reasons of both cost and programme effectiveness, certain activities are better carried out at these levels. This is not always easy to do and is thus an area that requires continued attention. With the aim of maximizing coordinated technical assistance and bringing such technical assistance as close as possible to the activities it serves, UNFPA developed its current TSS system, with eight country support teams (CSTs) based in subregions throughout the world. The Fund draws on the wide range of expertise that is available under this system, in particular in the CSTs, which are composed of experts in various disciplines related to the core programme areas of UNFPA, most of whom come from within the United Nations system. The TSS system has also facilitated regular consultation and dialogue between and within the specialized agencies on technical and programmatic concerns and has created an environment that is more dynamic and has greater flexibility in responding to emerging needs.

Decentralization

16. UNFPA policy in the past few years has been to expand decentralization in all aspects of its programmes in an effort to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of its programme delivery. At the same time, the Fund has stepped up monitoring of this process, particularly through its Policy

Application Reviews, in order to ensure that policies and procedures are being adhered to and to identify any potential gaps in the system. An overall review of the Fund's decentralization process has indicated that the time-lag between project appraisal and final approval has been reduced, thereby improving implementation and delivery rates, as well as facilitating an increase in the use of national experts in the formulation and implementation of projects. With its new programme guidelines, issued at the end of 1997, UNFPA is nearing full decentralization of programme approval authority. For the future, UNFPA intends to monitor this process carefully in order to overcome obstacles and remedy weaknesses.

Monitoring and evaluation

17. UNFPA's revision of its monitoring and evaluation guidelines, including procedures as well as tools and instruments, has been part of the updating of programming guidelines that the Fund has undertaken in consultation with all of its United Nations development partners. Indicators for monitoring and evaluating programmes in UNFPA's three core programme areas (reproductive health, population and development strategies, and advocacy) have been developed as a result of expert group meetings and workshops, with participation from both within and outside the United Nations system. A particular challenge for UNFPA now is to complete its ongoing revision of its financial monitoring systems. Attention has been given to assessing and learning from past experience in programming UNFPA's support for national population programmes. This is being reflected in the Fund's country programme submissions to the Executive Board, which now seek to address lessons learned more systematically and to apply these lessons in the proposed programme. While more needs to be done in this area, this is a positive trend that the Fund will continue to strengthen. Moreover, the entire thrust of the comprehensive review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is based on such a lessons-learned approach.

18. The Fund's revision of its monitoring and evaluation guidelines coincided with a reexamination of monitoring and evaluation issues undertaken by the JCGP. A JCGP workshop on this took place early in 1997 during which technical issues and challenges were discussed. UNFPA also contributed to a technical meeting sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) on evaluation of reproductive health programmes.

19. UNFPA has also participated in consultations with the United Nations concerning the impact evaluation of operational activities for development. This evaluation is a system-wide exercise undertaken within the context of the General Assembly's triennial policy review of operational activities, which will examine in particular the impact of operational activities in regard to national

capacity-building. UNFPA provided inputs to the development of terms of reference for the evaluation and briefed the evaluators at headquarters as well as field levels. The Fund also collaborated with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in a desk study on UNFPA support of national capacity-building in reproductive health.

B. Management, personnel and finance: Audit and aid accountability

20. The main mechanism for the exchange and coordination of internal audit issues continues to be the annual Meeting of the Representatives of the United Nations Organizations and Multilateral Financial Institutions. The UNDP Office of Audit and Performance Review (OAPR), which includes the UNFPA Internal Audit Section, is an active participant in these discussions. At the same time, UNFPA management continues to employ mutually reinforcing means to communicate responsibility, assess performance and measure results in order to obtain assurances with regard to accountability, especially in the context of UNFPA's policy on decentralization. Primary responsibility for this rests with the Fund's Office of Oversight and Evaluation, which, among other things, conducts policy application reviews to assess, inter alia, where greater clarity in programme policy and technical guidance is needed to ensure substantive accountability under decentralization.

II. Follow-up to General Assembly Resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1995 and to ECOSOC resolution 1997/59 of 11 July 1997: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly

21. UNFPA's experiences during the past two years have demonstrated the difficulties in trying to meet programme commitments under the current funding system, which by its nature gives rise to uncertainty and unpredictability. In 1996, for example, over 20 per cent of the Fund's total pledges were outstanding at year's end. This caused significant cash-flow problems for the organization and required that UNFPA draw down on its operational reserve to meet its programme commitments. It also created considerable uncertainty in programming at the country level. The Fund experienced a similar cash-flow problem in 1997, although the year ended on a positive note as several of UNFPA's major donors generously made additional contributions to the Fund.

22. These experiences point out the great need for a predictable, assured and continuous funding mechanism, perhaps through multi-year pledging or other means. UNFPA, and its partners in the United Nations development system, must be able to fulfill their programme commitments without encountering the disruptions and slow-downs in programming that result from uncertain and irregular funding patterns.

23. The funding situation must be examined within the context of the resource commitments agreed to in the Programme of Action of the ICPD: an estimated $17 billion a year by the year 2000 for the implementation of reproductive health and family planning services, plus other basic actions for collecting and analysing population data. Two-thirds of these costs are to be met by the countries themselves; the remaining one-third, approximately $5.7 billion in complementary resources, is to come from donor countries.

24. UNFPA submitted a conference room paper to the Executive Board at its annual session 1997 that examined the likely consequences of not meeting the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action due to resource shortfalls. The paper was later revised and submitted to the Board as a formal document (DP/FPA/1997/12 and Annex) at the request of the Board. It was introduced at the third regular session 1997 and will be taken up by the Board at its second regular session 1998.

25. The report projects readily quantifiable results of resource shortfalls, based on three plausible scenarios of future resource mobilization through the year 2000: constant growth trend (yielding a shortfall of $2.1 billion), intermediate growth (shortfall of $2.9 billion), and low growth (shortfall of $3.8 billion). The likely consequences of these shortfalls include, depending on the scenario: (a) an additional 44 million to 80 million individuals or couples not using any contraceptive method at all in the year 2000; (b) an additional 130 million to 230 million unintended or unwanted pregnancies in the 1995-2000 period; (c) an additional 50 million to 90 million induced abortions in the 1995-2000 period; (d) an extra 59 million to 110 million unintended births between 1995 and 2000; (e) an additional 300,000 to 540,000 maternal deaths during 1995-2000; and (f) an additional 4.9 million to 8.9 million infant and child deaths during 1995-2000. The report explores future actions on the part of donor countries to strengthen their commitments to the full implementation of the ICPD agenda and examines how this may affect UNFPA's future resource level.

26. The reaction to the report has been relatively positive and constructive. Many regard it as an important contribution to the follow-up to the ICPD, particularly in its effort to begin a serious discussion on operationalizing the resource aspects of the ICPD Programme of Action and developing a joint resource strategy to assure its success. At the same time, some have raised questions about the report's working assumptions and methodology, as well as its accuracy concerning levels of bilateral funding. The second regular session of the Board in 1998 will provide the Board with the opportunity to discuss these and other considerations in depth, the outcome of which will be included in the report on the session.

III. Follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 1997/52 of 23 July 1997: HIV/AIDS

27. The prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, is an integral component of reproductive health care. UNFPA provides support for HIV/AIDS-

prevention activities in line with national AIDS policies and programmes and within the global strategy of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The main focus of UNFPA's activities is at the country level, and this is also where the Fund places its emphasis in working with UNAIDS. UNFPA support for AIDS prevention is integrated into ongoing programmes in reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, service delivery, and information, education and communication (IEC). Revised guidelines issued as a follow-up to the ICPD recognize prevention of HIV/AIDS as an integral component of reproductive health. In 1996, the latest date for which firm figures are available, UNFPA provided assistance to 124 countries for HIV/AIDS activities (amounting to $20.5 million -- $19.5 million at the country level and $1.0 million at the regional and inter-regional level), as compared to 114 countries in 1995 ($20 million), 103 in 1994 ($15.5 million), 93 in 1993, 84 in 1992 and 41 in 1991. Precise figures are often difficult to obtain since in many countries such activities are an integral part of reproductive health information and services.

28. UNFPA brings to UNAIDS the conviction that any organized effort to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS must be based on the right of women to control their reproductive and sexual health. UNFPA, in line with WHO, considers family planning, maternal health care, prevention of abortion and prevention of reproductive tract infections, including STDs and HIV, as the four most important components of reproductive health. By promoting and supporting effective interventions in these four areas, UNFPA assistance will help countries to secure and safeguard women's reproductive health, thereby enabling women to become full and equal partners in the process of development.

IV. Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/61 of 25 July 1997: Integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits

29. The vehicle for the coordinated inter-agency follow-up to the recent international conferences has been the three inter-agency task forces established under the ACC -- Basic Social Services for All (BSSA), Enabling Environment for Economic and Social Development, and Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods for All -- as well as through the inter-agency committee following up on the Fourth World Conference for Women (FWCW). UNFPA has been an active participant in all these United Nations system-wide mechanisms. The Fund chaired the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, with the participation of 14 United Nations bodies. The task force set up working groups, each with a lead agency, to produce a set of guidelines on central ICPD themes.

30. The success of the IATF led to the establishment by the ACC of the three system-wide inter-agency task forces to galvanize the United Nations system follow-up around priority goals emerging from recent global conferences and to rationalize and strengthen the mechanisms for delivery of

coordinated assistance at the country and regional levels. Factors contributing to the synergistic collaboration and coordination achieved by the Task Force include the commitment of the participants to the work of the Task Force, a clear statement of goals, and broad-based institutional administrative support. These were able to overcome several constraints, including limited resources and lack of time and human resources.

31. Significant lessons learned on coordination from the experience of the task force on BSSA include:

(a) Task-focused objectives and working through informal mechanisms provided increased synergy and promoted greater collegiality and coordination;

(b) Clear objectives provided a strategic focus;

(c) The "task manager" approach within the ACC held out great possibilities for coordination and collaboration.

32. It is now up to the Resident Coordinator system to use the end-products of the BSSA to implement programmes and to produce training modules in the Turin Training Centre in Italy that will facilitate their optimal use by United Nations and national staff. Broad-based involvement of all development actors including the civil society will make for a better utilization pattern of the products. It is expected that the outputs of the BSSA task force will be linked to the CCA, Country Strategy Note (CSN) and UNDAF processes.

33. In addition to its active participation in the integrated follow-up through the various task forces, UNFPA has addressed key issues that have emerged from the conferences. For example, the Fund has striven to mainstream gender concerns into all of its activities and to promote the empowerment of women as a fundamental prerequisite to sound reproductive health. It has committed itself to be an advocate for gender equity and equality and has been an outspoken advocate for the elimination of harmful practices and all forms of discrimination against women, including female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual abuse and violence against women, among others. UNFPA has also actively promoted reproductive rights. For example, the Fund organized, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Roundtable of Human Rights Treaty Bodies on "Human Rights Approaches to Women's Health with a Focus on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights". This was the first time experts from all six human rights treaty bodies, along with representatives of United Nations organizations and NGOs, had been brought together to address a thematic issue.

34. UNFPA has been active in other areas as well. For example, since the Rio Conference, the Fund has acted as the Task Manager for monitoring the implementation of Chapter 5 of Agenda 21. It also participated in the review of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS), keeping the relationship between population growth and distribution and sustainable development in focus during this process. In response to the Habitat Agenda (notably paras. 125-127), the Fund continues to help Governments to address population issues in urban planning and to develop better databases for this purpose, as well as to create awareness of the integral importance of population issues for human settlements. Moreover, UNFPA has striven to create awareness of the relationship between food security and population and, where possible, to ensure that population factors are considered as important elements in matters related to food demand and supply, as called for in the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit. Finally, in view of the recognition that women bear a disproportionate burden of poverty, a theme common to the ICPD, FWCW and the Social Summit, most resources within the Fund's country programmes are directed towards the poorest and most vulnerable groups in society, whose reproductive rights are frequently ignored and who most often lack access to reproductive health care.

35. The momentum created by the ICPD and the other recent major international conferences has increased the importance of coordination and the integrated follow-up mechanisms that have been established in the context of the ACC and has provided a strong new basis for cooperation among the various partners in the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. UNFPA continues to play an active role in facilitating this process and has participated actively in all the initiatives undertaken within the UNDG for a collaborative approach for such activities. In the cooperation between UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions, much of the policy-level collaboration is in direct support of programme-level cooperation. UNFPA enjoys relatively good cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and is working in a collegial manner to critically assess how the relationships can be improved within the cooperative framework of the UNDG, UNDAF and Resident Coordinator system.

V. Recommendation

36. The Executive Board may wish to take note of the Report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council" (DP/FPA/1998/2), and decide to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments made thereon by delegations at the present session.

EXCERPT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, HELD FROM 20 TO 24 APRIL 1998

UNDP report

1. The Administrator introduced the report to the Economic and Social Council for UNDP (DP/1998/14 and Corr.1). He noted that it was prepared in a common format, jointly agreed upon by UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). The report came at a particularly important time as 1998 would be a determining year with regard to the functioning of UNDP as well as to the nature and level of operational activities for development of the United Nations system as a whole. The triennial comprehensive policy review was under preparation, an exercise that would lead to Economic and Social Council and General Assembly resolutions evaluating the performance of UNDP and setting the strategy for United Nations development operations in the years to come. The report also highlighted the challenges UNDP, as all other development organizations, must face as it pursued its broad mandate in poverty eradication at a time when multilateral resources for development were declining.

2. He noted that the length of the report was constrained by Executive Board requirements and also that detailed information on the subjects covered in the report would be available in the annual report of the Administrator, to be submitted at the annual session 1998.

3. The triennial comprehensive policy review was currently in a state of advanced preparation and represented an opportunity to assess in detail many of the issues arising from operational activities that had been informally raised by Member States, including at the Economic and Social Council. UNDP had responded in detail to the questionnaires of the review and was collaborating with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the preparation of the report to the Council and to the General Assembly. The Administrator emphasized that the starting point for the review should be the Secretary-General's reform programme as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/12 A and B.

4. The Administrator gave an overview of three areas for discussion in connection with the report to the Economic and Social Council: the United Nations presence at the country level; the United Nations Development Assistance Framework; and funding issues.

5. The Secretary-General's reform had been instrumental in strengthening the United Nations presence at the country level through the resident coordinator system pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/209, 47/199 and 50/120. Discussions among the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) members and its Executive Committee were proceeding with regard to strengthening the resident coordinator system. As manager and funder of the resident coordinator system, and in view of the legislated link between the UNDP Resident Representative and the Resident Coordinator, as reaffirmed by the Secretary-General, UNDP was

pursuing, with other programmes and funds, policies and concrete measures to strengthen the overall resident coordinator system. Measures in that respect included: widening the pool of qualified candidates (in the preceding year 11 out of 35 persons selected as resident coordinators had come from organizations other than UNDP); more specific competency assessments and appraisal methodologies; and comprehensive strategies to expand common premises and services.

6. UNDP had embarked, with the other UNDG members, on 18 pilot United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). The first joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF had been held in January 1998 to look at the pilot UNDAF experience of Viet Nam. An informal joint meeting to follow-up on the January meeting would be held during the present session of the Board. One issue that had arisen at the first regular session was the need for more work in streamlining programming instruments of various funds and programmes, with the overall aim of beginning the UNDAF at the start of a common programming cycle. Greater streamlining in the process was needed. UNDP believed that national ownership was essential to ensure conformity with the priorities of programme countries in which all United Nations system activities were anchored. A review of the UNDAF pilot process would commence in July 1998.

7. While the issue of funding was not discussed in detail in the report to the Economic and Social Council, the important process under the leadership of the Executive Board should be noted. The Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group was a very important mechanism in forging and intensifying the partnership with traditional and emerging donors, programme countries, the Secretariat and the Executive Board.

8. The Administrator noted that UNDP had continued to collaborate closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and at the country level, the capacity of the resident coordinator system was strengthened to support an expanded response to the epidemic. Increased funding and further mainstreaming was needed for enhanced normative and operational activities relating to HIV/AIDS.

9. On the follow-up to global conferences, in response to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/6, the Administrator pointed out that the inter-agency task forces created by the Administrative Committee on Coordination had served to encourage inter-agency teams at the country level, working under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. As the task forces had been replaced by less formal networking arrangements, the UNDAF was essential to retaining their momentum. The global conferences had produced a profound effect on UNDP, including making poverty eradication the overriding objective of UNDP work. The fusion of normative arrangements at the global level had played a role in guiding the country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) as well as the UNDAF pilot exercises.

Discussion

10. Many delegations took the floor to comment on the report. They thanked the Administrator for his opening remarks, which provided analysis and information additional to the report. Most speakers encouraged UNDP to include more

analysis, including charts and figures, and less description in future reports to the Economic and Social Council. The report should highlight the major points on which the Council could provide advice as well as identify problems. One delegation emphasized that the reports should help to enable progress in poverty eradication efforts in programme countries. Another delegation, supported by many others, requested that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF prepare a consolidated list of actions on which the Council could provide advice to the funds and programmes for submission to the Council's 1998 substantive session. WFP could also be included in the exercise.

11. Several speakers welcomed the inclusion of information on the work of UNDG and on UNDAF in the report and Administrator's statement. The need to increase coordination, avoid overlap and ensure cost-effectiveness was emphasized. Further information on the differentiation among the programming instruments of the UNDAF, the country strategy note and the CCF was requested. United Nations specialized agencies must participate in the UNDAF process, according to many delegations. One delegation requested further information on the legal framework for the UNDG at the country level. Another underlined that the UNDAF should be under the leadership of the programme country and reflect ownership by that country. Information on how the sustainable human development mandate of UNDP fitted in with the mandates of UNFPA and UNICEF in the UNDAF process was requested. One delegation requested more information on the delays in implementing common services at the country level.

12. Measures taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system were welcomed. Those measures included the expansion of the pool of candidates for resident coordinator, including through staff secondments and enhanced selection and review criteria. A query was raised regarding the number of resident coordinators who came from other organizations in 1994 versus 1998 and how many women resident coordinators were currently serving. The issue of funding of the resident coordinator system would be discussed by the Economic and Social Council and during the triennial comprehensive policy review in the General Assembly. Several delegations commented on the funding and management of the resident coordinator system, with some suggesting that the costs for support of the system be shared among involved organizations. One delegation expressed support for the continued designation of the UNDP Resident Representative as United Nations Resident Coordinator. Another delegation requested information on the designation of humanitarian coordinators who were different from the resident coordinator in a particular country.

13. One delegation, supported by another, requested systematic inclusion of sections on relations with the Bretton Woods institutions and on the preparations for participation in the humanitarian segment in future reports.

14. Many delegations expressed the view that concrete examples of lessons learned and good practices should have been included in the section on capacity-building and national execution, as well as with regard to the harmonization of programming cycles. Greater efforts were required to determine the common understanding of the definitions of capacity-building and national execution. Several delegations expressed their commitment to national execution. The need to refer to South-South cooperation in relation to national execution was mentioned by some speakers.

15. The emphasis on programme countries setting their own priorities was underlined by some delegations. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation for Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) statement on "Development Partnerships in the New Global Context" (May 1995) was a useful reference in that regard.

16. The work to improve monitoring and evaluation activities was praised. However, more work was required in that area, in particular in relation to the CCFs, and with regard to updating current methods in light of the work of the UNDG. While enhanced project compliance was noted in some regions, others needed further efforts to increase compliance. Several speakers looked forward to receiving the evaluation compliance report at the annual session 1998. Queries were raised on progress in undertaking joint strategic evaluations and on the concept of rating of agencies mentioned on page 70 of the publication "Measuring and Managing Results: Lessons for Development Cooperation".

17. Several delegations expressed their support for UNDP funding of training activities held at the Staff College in Turin.

18. With reference to the cooperation of UNDP with civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, one delegation questioned the reference contained in paragraph 58 of the document on the shift from representative to participatory democracy, stating that in his country's view that interpretation was outside of the domain of the Executive Board.

19. Comments from the secretariat on the progress of decentralized authority would be welcomed.

20. Some speakers asked for clarification of paragraph 44 of the document, stating that their delegations still had questions about the concept of multi-year contributions as a model for funding arrangements. One delegation requested that if reference to burden-sharing was included, then the report should also mention the possibility of maintaining voluntary funding arrangements. Other measures could be explored, including through the private sector.

21. Progress in the follow-up to global conferences was noted by many delegations. One speaker requested further information on the degree to which resident coordinators were incorporating the programmes of action resulting from the conferences in country-level programming. Another speaker asked for information on the linkage and coordination of the work of the various inter-agency bodies on follow-up to conferences. One delegation requested further information on the "20/20" event in Hanoi and a copy of the report on social exclusion. Further references to the role of South-South cooperation in the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development would be welcomed.

22. Some delegations stated that they were of the view that the contribution of UNDP to the field of human rights should emphasize the right to development and refer to work with programme countries in addressing poverty eradication. Speakers underlined the need for UNDP to avoid conditionality in its work.

23. Requests were made for more information on lessons learned from inter-agency cooperation in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS.

24. Two delegations believed that the report should have included reference to the narrowing of the UNDP programme focus.

Response by the secretariat

25. The Administrator welcomed the proposal for a consolidated report by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to the Economic and Social Council.

26. With regard to the UNDAF process, he noted that United Nations specialized agencies were not yet formally participating in the process. The Administrative Committee on Coordination would need to agree formally on the inclusion of the specialized agencies in the UNDAF process. The linkage between the UNDAF and the resident coordinator system at the country level would need to be worked out. In response to a query, he stated that UNDP did not create country strategy notes in cases where the Government did not wish to have it. The CSN was a government-owned document and could be seen as representing the "demand side" of development cooperation whereas the UNDAF represented the supply-side response by the United Nations operational entities. The UNDAF was the equivalent of a UNDP advisory note, he stated, and could possibly replace that note at a future date. In response to a query, he noted that sustainable human development was an overarching concept that was applicable to most development assistance. He hoped that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board could convene future joint meetings with the UNICEF Board as the UNDAF experience progressed.

27. In response to the comments made, he emphasized that resident coordinators did not want to be cut off from UNDP, which through its programme and administrative funding provided essential support for coordination. Seven resident coordinators had written to the Secretary-General on the necessity of having UNDP as an organizational base from which to operate the resident coordinator function. In response to the delegations who had suggested cost-sharing of the resident coordinator system, the Administrator stated that cost-sharing of the support office at the country level would be welcomed as UNDP was currently responsible for funding the offices. However, UNDP had a mandate from the Secretary-General for funding and managing the resident coordinator system on behalf of the United Nations system. In line with that mandate, UNDP would need to continue to provide central funding for the resident coordinator to ensure the unity of management and funding as well as accountability.

28. The Administrator cited the following figures: of 131 resident coordinators, 11 out of 35 designated in 1997 were from organizations outside of UNDP, a figure which had resulted in the doubling of resident coordinators from outside the organization; 30 of the 131 resident coordinators were women; the goal for women resident coordinators was 40 per cent by the year 2001; 41 out of 131 resident coordinators had worked outside of UNDP in their careers; there were currently four United Nations houses - in Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi and South Africa; and 30 other premises were virtually ready for designation as United Nations houses.

29. Inter-agency collaboration existed in the area of monitoring and evaluation, the Administrator noted, but strategic evaluations were needed. He expressed disappointment about the lack of progress in harmonization, an area that required greater encouragement from inter-governmental processes.

30. In response to the clarifications sought, the Administrator noted that the paper on multi-year funding referred to in paragraph 44 of the report had been requested by the office of the Secretary-General as an input from UNDP for the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on the financing of operational activities.

31. Progress had been seen on developing a common understanding of national execution and capacity-building. New guidelines for national execution had been developed through an inter-agency process. UNDP had contributed chapters on national execution and the programme approach to the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions manual on operational activities.

32. He noted that a full report on the dissemination of information to country offices regarding the follow-up to global conferences would be made available to the Executive Board at the present session. He informed the Board that at the special session of the Economic and Social Council in May, UNDP would make a special presentation on collaboration with the OECD/DAC, World Bank and United Nations in the development of indicators to monitor progress in meeting the goals of international conferences.

33. In response to the query raised, he noted that the concept of agency ratings mentioned in the joint UNDP/Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) publication "Measuring and Managing Results: Lessons for Development Cooperation" merely implied that if aid agencies had a uniform rating system for assessing their respective activities, it could provide a basis for comparing the performance of the assistance they provided in different fields. An upcoming headquarters and country-level workshop in Santo Domingo would examine the lessons of the report as they applied to UNDP.

34. With regard to the comments on the human rights policy document, he underlined that UNDP assistance was unconditional and that programme countries had the right to be free from poverty. He agreed that the humanitarian segment was a key part of the Economic and Social Council session, especially in the current year, when the linkage with development would be discussed. Progress in decentralization was also worth examining, he stated, noting that UNDP had decentralized most of its programming operations except for the approval of the CCF.

35. The Associate Administrator stated that UNDP would endeavour to incorporate the suggestions made by delegations at the present session in the report of the following year. He noted that the time-frame of some CCFs had been adjusted in order to enable harmonization of programming cycles among the funds and programmes. There had been some progress in harmonization with regard to the presentation of budget formats among the funds and programmes. Direct execution, he underlined, was an exception which occurred in countries in special development situations where rapid delivery was needed or where the Government had requested UNDP to take action.

UNFPA report

36. In introducing the Report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council (DP/FPA/1998/2), the Executive Director noted that the report had been prepared in the format jointly agreed to by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme. The report covered a wide range of issues, including funding arrangements, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations Conferences and summits. In response to a request of the Executive Board, the report included updated information on the work of UNFPA in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention.

37. The Executive Director underscored the Fund's strong commitment to the implementation of various General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions of the Executive Board on operational activities, as well as the Fund's active participation in and commitment to the Secretary-General's programme of reform. With the support and guidance of the Executive Board, UNFPA continued to put into practice the long-standing commitment to coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs and priorities of all partner countries. The Executive Director noted that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) pilot phase was an important part of those efforts. She stated that it was already clear that the UNDAF process facilitates a coordination of approach as regards data systems, situational analyses, monitoring and follow-up reporting to conferences. Overall, that would lead to a more solid basis for the formulation of programmes of assistance to a given country. The Executive Director observed that continued common attention was directed to issues related to national execution and the shared goal of strengthening national capacity. UNFPA had brought to the attention of other members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) lessons learned from its experience in that area.

38. Several delegations stated that the UNFPA report to the Economic and Social Council was clear and comprehensive. Delegations welcomed, in particular, the focus on the UNDAF, the United Nations resident coordinator system and the Fund's commitment to the United Nations reform process. A few delegations observed that the report should be more analytical. One delegation noted that the report should have more substance. Some delegations noted that additional information on the follow-up to the ICPD and progress achieved by the United Nations Development Group should also have been included.

39. One delegation, commending the analytical approach of the UNFPA report, noted that it captured the work of the Fund succinctly and comprehensively. The delegation added that the report clearly expressed the challenges and opportunities that UNFPA faced. The same delegation noted that the report should include more information on ICPD follow-up. The delegation also recommended that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF should prepare, for submission to the upcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, a consolidated list of areas where intergovernmental action regarding funds and programmes was needed and would, the delegation noted, greatly assist delegations in structuring their comments for the triennial review of operational activities. The same delegation was pleased to note the importance accorded to the UNDG, the piloting phase of UNDAF and to the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. The

delegation commended the measures undertaken to establish ownership of the system by participating agencies, including expanding the selection pool for resident coordinators and refining the terms of reference to ensure the greatest possible impartiality and neutrality; the secondment of staff from agencies other than UNDP to UNDG; greater harmonization of programming cycles and procedures; and increased use of common services and common premises. On the issue of financing for development, the delegation observed that alternatives to assessed or multi-year contributions should be explored, including a greater role for the private sector.

40. Another delegation, while welcoming the Fund's observations on the UNDAF process and noting their usefulness to the Economic and Social Council, noted that it was not fully satisfied with the report, which needed to be more analytical and less descriptive. The delegation observed that additional information on the follow-up to ICPD should have been included. Another delegation, noting that the report should be more problem-oriented, stated that it should include recommendations for action to be taken by the Council. The same delegation added that the report should include information on the Fund's relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions, and noted that there should be a recommendation from the Executive Board to the Council suggesting systematic reporting in the future on collaboration with these institutions. The delegation added that future reports should also contain a specific section on operational activities in the area of humanitarian assistance. Another delegation inquired about what could be done to increase collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions.

41. Another delegation observed that the annual reports to the Economic and Social Council were particularly important because of the upcoming triennial policy review of operational activities and the role that the Council played in that review. Noting the key role played by UNFPA in the follow-up to ICPD, the delegation stated that it would have liked the report to make reference to the ICPD+5 process. The delegation welcomed the Fund's efforts to increase national capacity-building and encouraged UNFPA to continue that work, which would help to ensure country ownership, programme sustainability and enhanced impact of United Nations development projects and programmes. The same delegation also welcomed the Fund's efforts to decentralize activities further to the field and noted that the Council needed to consider the question of the harmonization of overall system-wide decentralization, including that of the specialized agencies. On the subject of the Fund's enhanced collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, the delegation asked how the collegial relations with the institutions translated into policy and programming actions at the institutional and country levels. The delegation commended the progress made by UNFPA in promoting national execution. The delegation suggested including a discussion on the use of direct execution at a future Executive Board session. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the delegation suggested that UNFPA adopt evaluation compliance reports which should be submitted to the Board for discussion, as was the case for UNDP. The delegation also inquired about the progress made in joint, strategic evaluations with other institutions, including the World Bank, as called for in General Assembly resolution 50/120.

42. One delegation, while expressing its appreciation for the activities being undertaken within the UNDAF, noted that even at that early stage it would like

to see strong monitoring and evaluation of those activities. The same delegation drew attention to paragraph 5 of the UNFPA report and commended the Fund for succinctly delineating key areas in which further efforts were needed for strengthening the resident coordinator system. Another delegation also noted that it attached great importance to the UNDAF process and to strengthening collaboration among United Nations funds and programmes, the World Bank, donors and other development partners. It underscored the desirability of UNFPA focusing on its areas of comparative advantage.

43. Another delegation, while welcoming the Fund's commitment to the United Nations reform process, noted that the experience of UNDAF viewed from the perspective of UNDP appeared to be quite different from that of UNFPA. The delegation stated that it shared the concerns that had been expressed in the report of the Fund and asked to know more about the modalities being devised within the context of UNDG to address the problems encountered by small organizations such as UNFPA. The same delegation stated that it strongly supported the idea contained in paragraph 4 of the UNFPA report that the UNDAF exercise should not duplicate past programming efforts or require a review of processes that had already been completed.

44. One delegation noted that there were some concerns associated with the UNDAF and the UNDG. For example, the legal framework of the UNDG should be examined. With regard to the resident coordinator system, the delegation stated that the mode of the relationship with the host country should be delineated as some problems had been encountered in relations with counterparts. The delegation also inquired about the cost implications and cost-effectiveness of the UNDAF and about the relationship of the country strategy note (CSN), UNDAF and the national planning framework. The delegation underscored that the national planning framework should not be diluted by the CSN and UNDAF.

45. Another delegation, expressing its appreciation for the information the Fund had provided regarding strengthening the resident coordinator system, noted that more information should be given on the harmonization of country programmes. The delegation added that the figures on resources in paragraphs 22-26 did not represent firm commitments. The delegation added that with reference to paragraph 15, additional information should have been included on the problems encountered in the Fund's technical support services (TSS) arrangements.

46. One delegation, while commending the report for being well prepared, stated that at a time when many developing countries were suffering economic hardships and their development efforts were being hampered, it was important to enhance and not diminish the role of UNFPA and UNDP. Noting that national execution should be both accelerated and taken more seriously, the delegation stated that there should be objective evaluations of national execution capability, and bureaucratic procedures within organizations should not be allowed to inhibit national execution.

47. Another delegation, while observing that the UNDAF and the resident coordinator system were good mechanisms and the core of the United Nations reform process, noted that ownership of the development process by programme countries should be fully respected. The same delegation commended the Fund for

employing local experts in developing countries and stated that that policy should be fully implemented and national execution should be increased. The delegation expressed concern at the shortage of core resources and the consequences of that on UNFPA and UNDP programmes. The delegation urged donors to show greater corporate responsibility in that regard.

48. One delegation, speaking also on behalf of two others, noted that the reports to the Economic and Social Council should be focused and analytical documents and should point out areas where collaboration could be strengthened. The delegation added that the UNFPA report under consideration marked an improvement over past such reports in that it highlighted lessons learned. Another delegation also commended the Fund for having included various lessons learned in the report.

49. Another delegation noted that it shared the Fund's concerns expressed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report regarding strengthening the resident coordinator system to enable it to provide better coordination and effective support at the country level. Another delegation observed the importance of simplifying the programming process and avoiding another layer of bureaucracy.

50. One delegation noted that the reports to the Economic and Social Council should make some contribution towards addressing the poverty indicators of any country. Concomitantly, the reports should be more analytical. Recognizing that it may be difficult to cover a range of issues given the page limitation of the document, the delegation recommended selecting a few key issues and analysing them more thoroughly. The same delegation supported the Fund's adding resources for and mainstreaming HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The delegation underscored the merit of UNDP and UNFPA preparing an additional one-page note delineating key issues that could be discussed by the Council at its upcoming session.

51. Another delegation agreed that a short note listing key issues pertaining to improved coordination of operational activities should be prepared for submission to the Economic and Social Council. The delegation suggested that such a note could be prepared by the UNDG. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the same delegation asked for information on how the Fund's Office of Oversight and Evaluation (OOE) helped UNFPA in assessing programme experience and, in particular, whether the OOE drew out and synthesized lessons learned from evaluations and shared these with the rest of the Fund.

52. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their constructive comments. She noted that the suggestion to submit a short list of key issues for consideration by the Economic and Social Council was a very useful one. She also agreed with the suggestion that the decentralization process was an important item for further discussion. She noted that UNFPA was issuing a letter to its field offices reminding them that they had decentralized authority within the limits of the approved country programme and subprogrammes. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the Executive Director noted that many steps had been taken to harmonize these processes and that the issue was also being addressed by such system-wide mechanisms as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and an Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation. She agreed that joint evaluations were a good way of reviewing

programmes and projects and that joint thematic evaluations needed to be carried out. On the topic of national capacity-building, the Executive Director observed that the Fund had put the item on the agenda of the UNDG. Also, at the annual session of the Board, the Fund would present a report on the absorptive capacity of programme countries. With regard to national execution, she underscored the importance of addressing the needs of national partners. The Executive Director noted that it was the Fund's goal to have full national execution; however, that required addressing various issues, including financial reporting and auditing in countries. She noted that additional information on the follow-up to ICPD could have been provided, but the Fund had sought to report on items that involved inter-agency collaboration.

53. With regard to the coordinated follow-up to conferences, the Executive Director noted that the recommendations of the three inter-agency task forces of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had been adopted by CCPOQ and a letter from the Chair had been sent out to all concerned. She observed that further efforts were needed to increase utilization by the field offices of the outputs of the task forces. The Executive Director noted that in her meetings with resident coordinators she drew attention to the following key points: the centrality of the UNDAF process; the importance of a common data system; gender as a key issue around which the whole system could work; the usefulness of thematic groups not simply as forums for information exchange but as an important means of identifying programming gaps and duplications, as well as a venue for policy dialogue involving all development partners, including the Government and non-governmental organizations; the importance of policy and programme reviews involving all members of the United Nations country team; and the key role of the resident coordinator system in promoting a coordinated follow-up to global conferences.

54. In responding to the comments and questions of delegations, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) underscored that UNFPA was firmly committed to the UNDAF and the resident coordinator system. He noted that the report to the Economic and Social Council had sought to identify areas that needed attention, notably through the UNDG process, including problems resulting from the dual responsibility of the United Nations Resident Coordinator also being the UNDP Resident Representative. The Deputy Executive Director stated that UNFPA was committed to the promotion of national execution of country programmes as evidenced by the increasing amount of resources being channelled through this execution modality, from 31 per cent of country programme resources in 1996 to 41 per cent in 1997. He added that the Fund's programming process was based on decentralized authority, which had evolved incrementally through a number of stages, including an initial pilot phase. He noted that full decentralization of programming authority required strengthening country offices in terms of staff and infrastructure, streamlining guidelines, training staff at country and headquarters levels, and improving management information systems. With regard to humanitarian assistance, the Deputy Executive Director observed that since the Governing Council had authorized the Fund to provide emergency assistance in 1994, UNFPA had been providing such assistance through executing agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. On the subject of relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, he noted that UNFPA worked very closely with them on operational

and policy matters. The Fund's Geographical Divisions regularly consulted with the World Bank to avoid duplications in programming and to identify gaps that could be addressed. The Fund also had technical consultations with the World Bank and would be a co-partner on reproductive-health training.

55. Responding to the query concerning the function of the UNFPA Office of Oversight and Evaluation, he noted that one main function of the OOE was to undertake thematic evaluations and synthesize the lessons learned. In addition, the OOE took into account other findings and lessons learned, for example, those deriving from audits and policy application reviews. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) concluded by thanking delegations for their encouraging and constructive comments.

56. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

98/5. UNDP/UNFPA reports to the Economic and Social Council

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1998/14 and Corr.1 and DP/FPA/1998/2) and of the recommendations therein and decides to transmit them to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments made by delegations and statements and answers given by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund at the present session;

2. Calls on the Administrator and Executive Director to provide in future reports to the Economic and Social Council: a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned in the field; a focus on issues that will permit the Council to fulfil its coordinating role; and, in this context, to present relevant statistical data in a consolidated manner;

3. Invites the Administrator and Executive Director to consult with other members of the United Nations Development Group on a consolidated list of issues central to the improved coordination of operational activities for submission to and consideration by the Economic and Social Council during its 1998 substantive session;

4. Also invites the Economic and Social Council to recommend, at its 1998 substantive session, actions intended to increase the usefulness of these reports as inputs to the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council, as called for in General Assembly resolution 48/162, by inter alia, considering whether any issues in the current format are suitable for joint recommendations by the funds and programmes.

24 April 1998